

CORE 152: CHALLENGES OF MODERNITY (Fall 2018)

Professor: Juan Fernando Ibarra Del Cueto
Persson Hall 118

E-mail: jibarradelcueto@colgate.edu

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 16:30-18:00 hrs.

"...The juggernaut of modernity is not all of one piece, and here the imagery lapses, as does any talk of a single path which it runs. It is not an engine made up of integrated machinery, but one in which there is a tensionful, contradictory, push-and-pull of different influences..."

- Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*

Overview

In this course we will explore the powerful and often contradictory forces—both material and intellectual—that characterize “modernity”. To do so, we will critically analyze a number of texts of the past 150 years and think how they have contributed to shape the problems and possibilities that modernity has brought upon us: mass politics, technological development, expanded lifespans, urbanization, colonialism, disciplinary power, etc. We will also explore issues of meaning, identity, and morality, which have risen to prominence in modern discursive practice.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete all readings for the session prior to each class and to actively participate in the discussion of the material assigned. Unexcused absences and lack of regular participation will count against the final grade. There will be a take-home mid-term exam and a cumulative final exam. Performance in the course will be evaluated as follows:

- Exams: 20% each, 40% total.
- Papers: 15% each, 45% total.
- Class participation: 15%.

Late Policy

Under certain circumstances, extensions on deadlines can be granted. The condition for this is that you **contact me in advance** to make appropriate arrangements. In absence of the latter, all late assignments will be marked down a third of a grade (example: A to A-) for every 24 hours that they are handed in after the due date.

Use of electronic devices

Please note that the use of computers, cell phones, and all other technological devices is not allowed during class out of respect for everyone in the classroom. This is an interactive course that demands your attention and participation.

A few additional notes to keep in mind:

- **On November 15th at 7pm** the class will attend the play “Club Diamond” at Brehmer Theater. Please write this down in your calendar and see me *immediately* if you have a conflict.
- Good participation requires **critical engagement** with the texts. While questions and opinions will (almost) always be welcome, I expect your interventions to articulate views that either challenge or support specific arguments. Please **make sure to bring to class a printed copy of the text** that will be discussed each session.
- I strive to create a learning environment that recognizes the **uniqueness of all students**. If you have specific learning needs or requests, please contact me and I’ll be happy to look for ways to accommodate them.
- Academic honesty: All work submitted for evaluation **must be of your own authorship**. Plagiarism—the use of words or ideas of other person without proper attribution—as well as all other forms of academic dishonesty, will be referred to the University Student Conduct Board.
- Some of you may find that writing can sometimes be hard. Fortunately, the University counts with an excellent resource that may be of help: The Writing and Speaking Center in 208 Lathrop Hall offers assistance with essays for any course. Experienced writing consultants can help native and non-native speakers alike with a written paper’s focus, development, organization, clarity, citations, or grammar. Details about all meetings remain private. To make an appointment, go to: <http://www.colgate.edu/writingcenter> or call [\(315\) 228-6085](tel:3152286085).

Texts

Please plan to order the following books:

- **Aimé Césaire**, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review)
- **Charles Darwin**, *The Origin of Species* (Harvard)
- **W. E. B. Du Bois**, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Penguin Classics)
- **Karl Marx and Frederick Engels**, *The Communist Manifesto* (Pathfinder)
- **Friedrich Nietzsche**, *On the Genealogy of Morality* (Hackett)
- **Virginia Woolf**, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt)

All other readings will be available on Moodle.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Topic 1 – What is modernity? Why do we care?

August 30th – *Intro to the course*

September 4th – *Modernity and our immediate environment*

- Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?”
- William Deseriewicz, “The Disadvantages of an Elite Education”

September 6th – *Can modernity be defined?*

- Berman, “Modernity-Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow”
- Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?”

Topic 2 – Darwin, Darwinism, and Human “nature”

September 11th – *Natural Selection and Evolution*

- Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Intro and chs. 1 and 3)

September 13th – *Evolutionary Theory and the Social World*

- Lehrer, “The Effeminate Sheep”
- Dupré, *Darwin’s Legacy*, (chs. 6 and 7)

Topic 3 – Social Change and Historical Materialism

September 18th – *Economic Relations and the Social Order*

- Marx and Engels, “The German Ideology” (pp. 148-163, 172-175)

September 20th –

- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (parts I and II)

****September 21st—First paper due****

September 25th – *Moving Beyond Class Relations*

- Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics”

Topic 4 – Colonialism, Race, and Identity

September 27th – *Modernity seen through colonized eyes*

- Chatterjee, “Our Modernity”

****September 28th – Take-home midterm distributed****

October 2nd – *On the Nature of the Colonial Enterprise*

- Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (pp. 31-78)

October 4th – *The Vicissitudes of Emancipation I*

- Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* (in-classroom movie projection)

****October 5th – Take-home midterm due****

****October 6th-9th – Midterm recess****

October 11th – *The Vicissitudes of Emancipation II*

- Class-discussion on *The Battle of Algiers*

October 16th – *Living Under The Veil I*

- DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Addendum: "The Souls of White Folk")

October 18th— *Living Under The Veil II*

- DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (chs. 1, 2, and 11)

October 23th – *Looking From the Other Side of the Veil*

- McIntosh, “White Privilege”
- Wise and Case, “Pedagogy for the Privileged: Addressing Inequality and Injustice without Shame or Blame”

October 25th – *Introspection*

- In-class screening of the movie “The Hours”.

Topic 5 – Culture and Morality

October 30th – *Good and Evil*

- Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality* (1st Treatise)

November 1st – *Guilt and Bad Conscience*

- Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality* (2nd Treatise)

****October 29th—2nd paper due****

November 6th – *The Human Psyche*

- Peter Gay (ed.), *The Freud Reader* (Part Two)

Topic 6 – Imagining Others

November 8th – *Modern Fiction*

- Woolf, “Mrs. Dalloway”

November 13th – *Gendered Modernity*

- Woolf, “Mrs. Dalloway” (continued)
- Bartky, “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power,”

November 15th— *Seeing All Sides*

- Everdell, “Pablo Picasso: Seeing All Sides, 1906-1907”
- Randol, “Danto’s definition” (available at: <http://www.mantlethought.org/arts-and-culture/dantos-definition>)
- Picasso, “Guernica” (available at: <https://guernica.museoreinasofia.es/gigapixel/en/#3/63.11/-120.59>)

****November 15th at 7 pm. Club Diamond Theatre Play. Attendance is mandatory****

****November 17th-25th – Thanksgiving recess****

Topic 7 – Rationality and Mass Politics

November 27th – *On the Religious Origins of Rationality*

- Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”

November 29th – *Bureaucratization of Everyday Life*

- Ritzer, “The Weberian Theory of Rationalization and the McDonaldization of Contemporary Society”

****November 30th—3rd paper due****

December 4th – *Democracy and Authoritarianism*

- Moore, “Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy” (selection TBD)

Topic 8 – Climate and Society

December 6th – *Understanding the Mechanics of Climate Change*

- Guest Lecture

December 11th – *Irreversible Turn?*

- Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction* (chs. 1, 5, 6, 13)

December 13th – *A Modern Challenge*

- Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt* (pp. 216-239)
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*

**** FINAL EXAM ****

Friday December 21st 12:00 – 2:00 pm